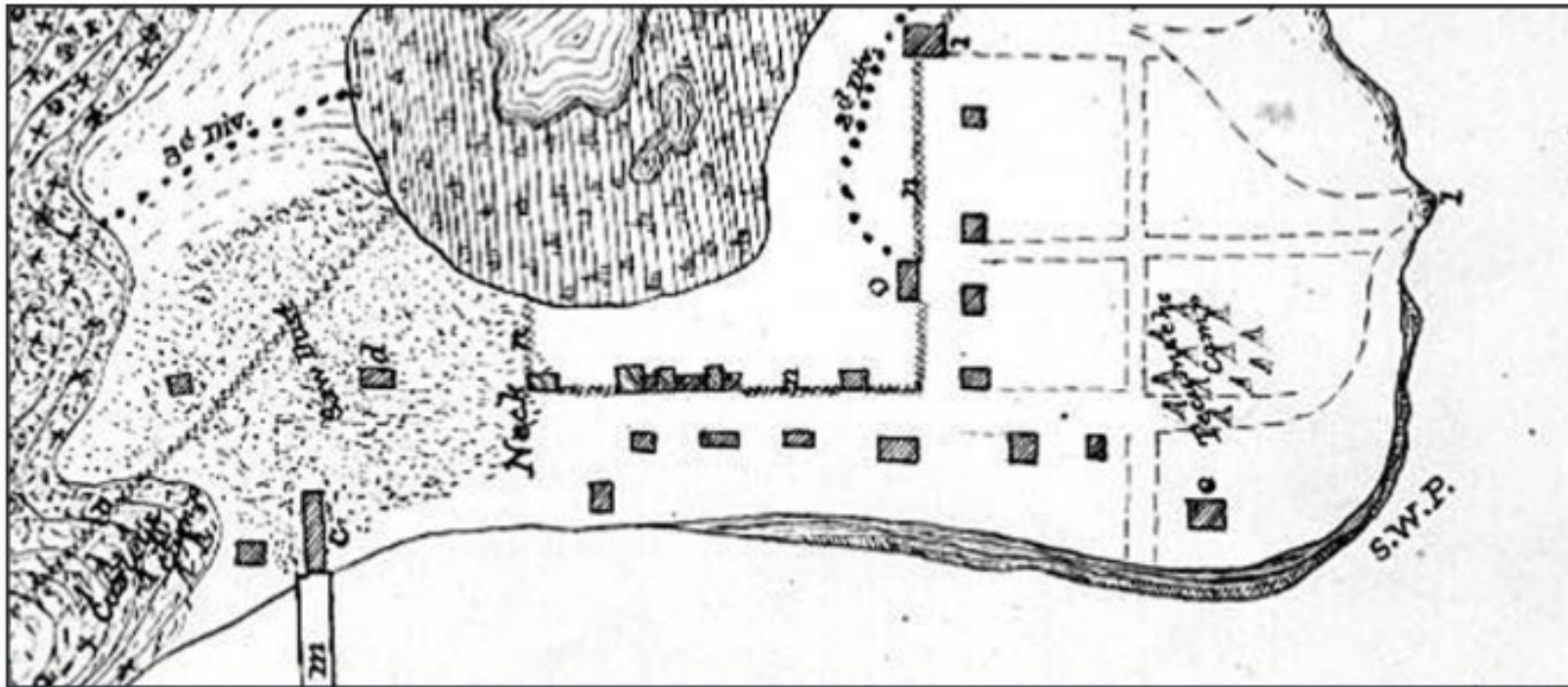


1856: THE BATTLE IN SEATTLE

The land you are standing on was once free. Before the foreign ideas of property and law were forcefully imported from Europe into the Puget Sound, the land belonged to no one and everyone. In 1853, the colonizers decided the land would be called the Washington Territory, named after their white leader. Unfortunately,

there were many natives who signed a treaty with the colonizers, a treaty that gave the entire Puget Sound area to the United States government. In 1854, leaders from several different tribes signed their names on the piece of paper, agreeing to

relocate their people to reservations and



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abandon their traditional way of life in exchange for money and fishing rights. However, there was one person who did not sign the paper. Unlike the others, he spit on it, refusing to obey the invaders. This man was named Leschi and he would lead the first rebellion against the authoritarian order we still live under here in Seattle.



The first battle took place in October of 1855 between a group of Nisqually and the government hired militia. Two white men were killed and a state of fear spread throughout the settler population. It was only a matter of time before the governor of the Washington Territory, sitting safely in his Olympia office, ordered the militia to capture Leschi and his brother in order to neutralize the strongest voices of dissent. Learning of what was coming, Leschi escaped and held multiple war councils with tribes as distant as the Yakama. By the end of his

were planning to turn the land into a giant work-camp, a place where a person must pay to sleep and work to live. Some of our more moronic critics will surely remind us that we would not be here if the settlers had been expelled. If only that were true and we were not here but rather living in a world that was free, a world without property, a world that could support itself. With nuclear war-heads and several military bases nearby, none of us will ever get to experience what life in this region was like before colonization. But it is within our abilities to create a world that is free from property. This is something that is within our power to bring about and is always just within our grasp. What is often lacking is imagination and the willingness to take risks.

1856, 1919, the late 1960's, the early 1970's, 1992, 1999, 2011, and 2012 are all years in which Seattle was besieged and the forces of death were confronted by the forces of life. 1856 will happen again endlessly until the reign of death is defeated. As Pablo Neruda wrote, you can cut down all the flowers but you cannot stop the coming of the Spring.

(Text from Tides of Flame #20, June 2012, p4-5)

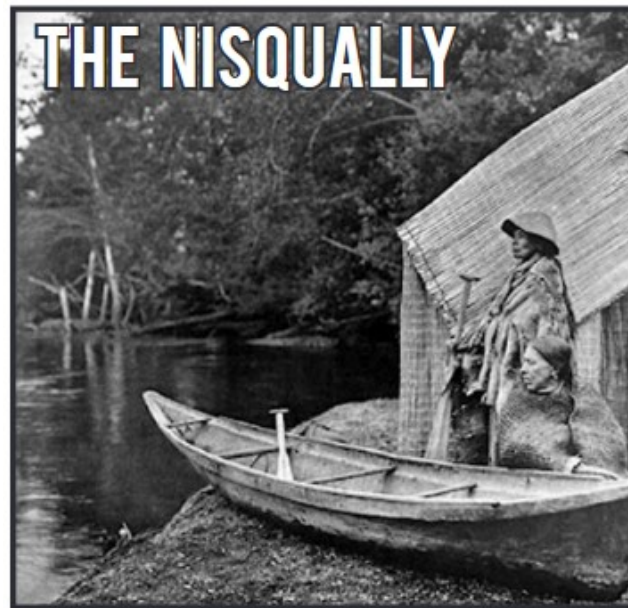


After the united tribes had retreated from the battle, the settlers scoured the area for any bodies. To their surprise, they were unable find a single one. The women of the tribes had carried them away into the woods that would soon be cut in Yesler's mills to build the future Seattle. The tribes had been so confident they would win that they did not bring enough food, knowing they could just eat all that was hoarded in the block-houses.

The rest of this story is terrible, filled with sorrow and betrayal, and beyond the scope of this piece of writing. The sole purpose of these words is to remember the people who lived freely along the Salish Sea and how they fought to expel the people who



journeys, he had formed a band of over 300 warriors and began to raid colonial settlements. During the winter of 1855-1856, the settlers did not leave their houses. The militia was besieged



in its forts, and the Puget Sound, the Cascades, and the edges of desert were once again free from the rule of colonizer. The force of 300 warriors soon grew to

number in the thousands.

In Olympia, the governor was panicking, sending desperate messages to Washington DC and fearing for his life. That winter, no one traveled the roads and pathways besides the natives. Commerce came to a halt. By January, the governor declared a "war of extermination" against the united tribes after having requested the assistance of the US military.

The warship Decatur arrived in Elliot Bay at the beginning of January to help in this war against the natives, guarding the wooded hills above the

the water with its cannons. While it was stationed there, refugee settlers fled to Seattle, delivering news of the war parties headed west. Chief Seattle and his white friends moved the friendly natives away from the city and the soldiers prepared for a battle.

On January 26th, the united tribes began to attack the settlements on what is now First Hill and Capitol Hill. Down below near the water, in what is now Pioneer Square, the colonizers had hidden themselves away behind walls and guns, waiting to repel the attack. The Decatur began to fire its cannons into the trees and eventually the militia and volunteers charged up from the water and began to fire small arms against the natives. Tree branches broke, trunks were shattered, bodies were torn apart, and



soon the united tribes retreated. They had not been expecting the mechanized terror floating in the water, nor did they expect to lose so easily. For months they had reclaimed their land and defeated every enemy sent after them. After the

Battle of Seattle, the “war of extermination” truly began.

Henry Yesler donated an entire harvest of timber to help build a large wall around the central colonial settlement. Within two weeks, early Seattle became a staging ground for genocide. The trees and the brush above the settlement were ravaged and cleared away, denuding the land

so that nothing could hide from the cannons. At the end of February, two more US warships arrived in the bay, ensuring that Seattle would never be attacked again.

